Af.-Congo Guinness 97.

Central Africa and the Congo.

AN ADDRESS BY

MRS. H. GRATTAN GUINNESS,

OF LONDON,

At the First Baptist Church, Chicago, Ill., Oct. 5th, 1884.

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The address having been delivered on the Lord's day in the place of the usual sermon, Rev. Dr. P. S. HENSON, the pastor, made the following introduction:

Dr. Henson's Address.

Dr. Henson said, in introducing Mrs. Guinness, that the sermon which he had intended to preach this evening was, by God's providence, postponed until next Sunday evening. Something better was in store for the audience to-night, and with exceeding personal pleasure, and sincerest gratitude to God, he welcomed to this Baptist church Mrs. Henry Grattan Guinness, of London, whose labors of love for the needy were known all over the world, and whose name is a household word in Christian families. God has laid upon her heart and upon her husband's, the "dark continent," of which she will speak to-night. She and her husband have, in connection with other Christian friends in England, sustained in Africa a great missionary work for several years past, but they cannot live forever to carry it on, and so desiring that there shall be an assurance of its perpetuity, they have proposed to commit it to the hands of the American Baptist Missionary Union, and this society, with great readiness and enthusiasm, have accepted the sacred trust, and propose to prosecute, with all the resources God may give them, this hopeful and most important work.

We owe to Africa a great debt, and it seemed to be proper that this work should be done by America. There are peculiar ties, peculiar obligations, binding America to Africa. A part of the debt we paid in the dreadful fratricidal war that wrung this land and drenched it in blood; now God seems to call for further payment of grateful, loving, honest hearts. If any people in the world should be greatly interested in giving the gospel to the dark continent, it should be the people who have held the sons of that same continent so long in bondage. Their debtors we are; and as God may give us grace and strength we propose, as best we can, to make payment for the past by sending them heaven's best gifts. I thank God that this work has been committed to us. I trust that with one heart, and with our utmost devotion of substance and service we shall prosecute it. I do not doubt our enthusiasm in its prosecution will be stirred by what we shall hear to-night from Mrs. Guinness, who, under God, was the means of opening up this dark continent to Christian evangelism. I introduce to you Mrs. Guinness.

MRS. GUINNESS' ADDRESS.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

To quicken your zeal, I want to bring before you the condition of one portion of the world, which, perhaps, more than any other, demands in our day the gospel of salvation. *Central Africa* is in some senses a new world. The continent of Africa, in its entirety, was discovered four hundred years ago, and we have long been familiar with its general outline. Egypt, as you are aware, has a history which runs back farther than that of any other country, but, with the exception of the northern coast of Africa, the site of Carthage, Cape Colony and a few other parts, the great interior of the continent has been a comparatively unknown region. Africa is 5,000 miles long and about 4,600 miles broad in its widest part. It is an enormous world in itself; and up to this nineteenth century it has been to all intents and purposes an unknown world. Few people realize the extent of the country. The discovery of Central Africa is almost as great an event in the history of the human race as was the discovery which Columbus made of these American continents in the fifteenth century. And such is the moral condition of Africa that it is deserving the name the "*lost* continent," the "*dark* continent."

In the Providence of God I have no doubt that one reason why Africa has remained so long unexplored has been because it was necessary that its feeble races should be concealed until the consciences of the stronger nations should be sufficiently developed, enlightened and restrained by Christian principle to do away with the crime of slavery. Unless this had been the case, the whole interior of Africa might have been desolated by the cruel and unscrupulous slave-trader. Only that after all the nations of Europe and your own great country here had put away slavery was this great world opened up to our knowledge. There is also a physical reason why Africa has not been earlier known and explored. The African continent is entirely unlike any other in its physical conformation. I suppose you remember the maxim that the wealth and civilization of a continent are always in proportion to the length of its coast-line, as compared with its area. If you glance at the map of Africa you see at once that its coast-line is the shortest by far of any continent on the globe. Its

sqdare mileage is much larger than that of North America, and yet its coast-line is much smaller. It has neither gulfs nor bays nor inlets nor estuaries. It is an almost unbroken line, so that you will scarcely find a good harbor all around its coast.

And there is still another reason. Central Africa consists mainly of an elevated table land from 1,000 to 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. It is only towards the coast that the surface shelves down to the ocean. It is well compared in form to a saucer turned upside down on a table. The center presents a plateau, surrounded by a ridge, then the edges of the saucer slope down to the table. From the shore line to about two hundred miles into the interior on both sides of Africa, the land rises from the low, maritime coast in rocky ridges rising higher and higher, until they reach a height of some 2,000 feet, and then from that point the high level is maintained right across the continent. It follows that *none of the rivers of Africa* (except the Nile) *are navigable from their mouths;* none can be sailed up from the ocean. Imagine what America would be if the Mississippi were barred with cataracts and rapids. If there were not a single navigable watercourse in the whole continent, the colonization of these United States, and of Canada, would not have proceeded as they have done, but would have been very long delayed. With the exception of the Nile, there is no African river navigable far from its mouth.

You are aware that when a continent is first opened up, there are no roads, and the forest covers the country, and in Africa the grass grows to a great height, and is extraordinarily strong, triangular, and possessed of sharp edges, so that it is difficult to cut one's way through. The natives are so distrustful of their neighbors that they never clear the ground to make roads, but block their villages as much as possible. Destitute alike of roads and of waterways, it is no great wonder that Central Africa has not been opened before. This new world never would have been civilized unless waterways into the interior had been discovered.

I want you to obtain an idea of the Congo. From the north and from the south great tributaries pour into the warm stream. One, so large at its mouth that it is two miles wide, another carrying such a volume of water that at thirty miles from its mouth its brown waters do not mingle with the Congo. One tributary is 1,500 miles long, and another coming from the north is supposed to connect with the Nile and so make a waterway across the continent.

The river turned southward, and where it traversed the central range of mountains, contracted to a narrow gorge and began to descend in cataracts towards the ocean; but just below this point it enlarges to a little lake called Stanley Pool, seventy miles around—a lake which is very important because it is just below this point that the cataracts begin. It is 300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to Stanley Pool. There are about 200 miles of cataracts and then a thousand miles of navigable water-way, then a short portage and 1,500 miles more of navigable water.

An Effectual Door.

It took three years to explore the river. What the Mississippi is to America, what the Yang-tse-Kiang is to China, the Ganges to India that the Congo is to Central Africa. It is a great highway, a great commercial water-way which is to open up to civilization that great continent. Observe, the mouth is within three week's sail of New York, or a fortnight's sail of London. Instead of going a tedious journey around the Mediterranean and then walking 800 miles to reach Central Africa, as some missionaries have done, hereafter travelers can take this water system and go to Central Africa in three weeks when the railroad shall be built across the ca aract region. When that is done, we shall have to reduce the cost of travel from Southern Egypt and the Soudan to the Congo.

Stanley took 999 days to travel 7,000 miles; and now never forget what I am going to tell you. During that journey of 999 days and over that long distance he never saw the face of a Christian, nor of a man who had had the opportunity to become a Christian. He saw millions of men, and expresses the belief that on the shores of the Congo alone there dwell fifty millions of human beings, and taking in his entire journey, he must have seen tribes which numbered in all something like 150,000,000 persons. Among them all there was not one who had ever heard the name of Jesus, not one that had had the chance to learn the way to heaven. It is difficult to realize, thus to travel week after week, month after month, and year after year, and constantly to see new men, new tribes, new races, and in all that time see men who have never heard the name of Jesus, the only name given under heaven whereby we can be saved.

African Missions.

You may count upon your fingers the missions in Central Africa. The Church Missionary Society has one at Uganda, the London Missionary Society one on Lake Tanganyika, the Presbyterians of Scotland two on Lake Nyassa, the American Board has commenced work in Bihe, and our own Livingstone Inland Mission, and that of the English Baptists, are established on this great river Congo. That is all! Thus you will see that Central Africa is *a vast unevangelized world;* and I hope you will try to realize that it does not comprise one nation or one country. There are no less than 687 different languages, all known and spoken on that continent; and yet I must mention another fact, as regards Central Africa, which is as encouraging as the other is discouraging. By the expression Central Africa I mean all south of Soudan and north of Zanzibar, and extending from ocean to ocean. In all that great region, while there are so many different languages spoken, all these languages belong to one class or family. They are not Negro, nor Berber, nor Coptic, nor Hottentot; but as a family of languages they are all cognate, just as we have the Latin languages of Europe, the Spanish, Portuguese, French and Italian. So all these Central African languages are related; many words used at Zanzibar are also in use at the mouth of the Congo. We have to learn languages separately. When Stanley came across Afr ca not one of these languages had been mastered. The Zulu languages have been learned and they are closely connected.

Now let me add in regard to this great world, that while the people are, of course, colored, you must not, for a moment, sup-

pose that they are negroes; all Africa is not peopled by negroes. There is an enormous variety of races. But this great district, watered and drained by the Congo, is peopled by a brown rather than a black people. They are a dark, rich, glowing brown color, and not negroes in the sense of having receding foreheads, curly hair, and flat noses. They are a finer race, with intelligent faces and good foreheads, and sometimes their hair is not at all woolly. We have had some eight or ten of these at our home in England, boys, and I never saw finer foreheads than were on the heads of those boys; I never saw boys better behaved.

The Livingstone Inland Mission.

After Mr. Stanley's discovery was reported in England, in the autumn of 1877, we set to work to see if we could do anything to send the gospel to the new world he had revealed. In the month of January, 1878, three months afterwards, we sent out two young men as pioneer missionaries. They and their successor had, as you may suppose, to encounter *extraordinary difficulties*. The region was unhealthy; the laborers died one after another; for they had no proper resources, no houses, no medicines; but they founded a station at the upper end of the navigable reach of the lower river, and afterwards one at the mouth of the Congo. Since then over fifty missionaries have been sent out, and three stations have been established through the cataract region, one at Stanley Pool, and one on the upper river. In other words, these missionaries penetrated 400 miles into the interior and established themselves on the upper river. We sent a steamer out for navigation of the lower river, and another, in sections, to be put together on the upper river. That steamer is made with shallow draft, in order to navigate the waters of the upper river where sand-banks abound.

What sort of people did they find? I may say in a word that they found a people living in the greatest ignorance, in spiritual, moral and social degradation almost indescribable, and holding superstitions that involved awful sacrifice of life. For instance, when a person dies the question is not, "Of what did he die?" but "Who killed him?" The fetich doctor is called and an inquiry made, and directly he or she is indicated (and it is always the man or woman the king wants to put out of the way that is pitched upon as the culprit), the poor unfortunate individual is seized; the whole town goes into mad excitement; they make him drink poison, or take him to the river and drown him, or to the cross-roads and burn him. Again and again our brethren have come across the remains of human beings thus burnt, little heaps of ashes and bones lying by a stake, and have had the painful conviction that the victims had not deserved such a fate, any more than you or I do. Hardly a week passes but in some of the villages where they reside there is some scene like this. Our own dear Congo boys who spent a year or two with us in London, one day before they came over, went into the missionary's house, looking sad and grave (they were thirteen or fourteen years of age), and saying "We have got to say good-bye to you." "Say good-bye?" replied the missionary, "what do you mean? Is it far you are going?" They replied, "Kakumpaka, (the king) has sent for us, and we must go." "What does he want?" said the missionary. "He wants *to cut off our heads*." Horrified, the missionary inquired "Why, what have you done?" "Nothing at all," said the boys, "but he wants us and we must go directly." So deeply is the habit of obedience implanted that no man or woman hesitates to go and be murdered if the local tyrant requires it. There was once a poor woman who brought the missionary's wife goat's milk for a baby, day by day. She was paid in "cloth." At last the missionary's wife said: "It is not worth while to tear up the cloth into small pieces; bring milk a week and I will give you a long piece." But the woman, with earnest surprise, replied: "Why, before a week is part, Lobengula may want to kill me, and then I shall get no cloth at all!"

One of our missionaries, Mr. McCall, once was present at a great palaver among the Matabele. The king inquired for some man who was not present at his court. Those near him replied that they could not tell why he was absent. The king turned round and said to his chief officer, "Take soldiers and go and eat up his village." This dreadful expression means more than meets the ear! It means "slaughter the men, burn the houses and bring the women, the children, and the cattle to me." The great monarch, M'tesa, of Uganda, the most powerful ruler in Central Africa, who has a large army and navy, sends out *every month* a general with troops to ravage a fresh district in this way and bring the victims to him. The social condition of these people is low and degraded in the extreme. Polygamy of course prevails, all labor is left to the women, though the men are clever as traders. I am thankful to say that the gospel has proved itself "the power of God unto salvation" in not a few cases already. Mr. Guinness had the joy of baptizing in London the first fruits of Congo land, the two first converts, about two years ago. When we came back from the ceremony we took the dear lads aside into our study to speak and pray with them, and afterwards we asked them to pray aloud. They did so, freely pouring out their hearts to God and asking him to help them keep the faith, and walk worthy of the profession they had made. It would have touched any heart to hear their prayers, eloquent and full of feeling, though as they spoke in their own language, we could not altogether follow. But it filled our eyes with tears and our hearts with thankfulness to listen to their young voices uplifted in earnest supplication.

Transfer of the Mission.

Having had the reponsibility of conducting it now for several years, having lost not less than twelve precious lives in connection with it on the Congo, and having expended on it more than a hundred thousand dollars, we were led to feel at last that it had outgrown our management, that the mission having attained the upper river, and having established itself at Stanley Pool, had only reached the point where its real work was to begin, and that it would demand in the future, far more than in the past, large resources, and much consecration of time and talent. When the steamer, the *Henry Reed*, is put together there will be a thousand miles open on the main stream and five

thousand on the tributary rivers. We felt that private individuals could never carry on this mission adequately, and that we must seek stronger and more efficient management for it. While we were pondering its future we received a note from Dr. Murdock, Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, asking about another mission in the north of Africa, saying that if we were willing to give it up his society would like to take it. I replied that we were not thinking of parting with it, but added: "If you are wanting a really important opening into central Africa, we are thinking of transferring to abler hands our Congo mission, and should be quite willing to entertain the proposition of surrendering it to your board." Further correspondence ensued; Dr. Murdock and Dr. Crane came over to London to investigate the question, read our printed reports and the letters of the missionaries, and went thoroughly into the whole matter. They reported to your board, and last May, at Detroit, as you know, the American Baptist Missionary Union and its managers heartily accepted the responsibility of conducting this mission in the future.

Our present visit to the United States is in connection with this business. We want to commend this mission to the prayers, the care, the earnest consecration and large liberality of American Christians, and especially of the Baptist churches.

Shall I tell you how I feel about parting with it? Somewhat as loving parents feel in giving a dear daughter in marriage; sad, yet glad and thankful! You know that when you have brought up your daughters, you cannot keep them always with you! One day they must go from the parent roof-tree, and when that day comes it is always a day of mingled feelings. We are heartily glad to hand this mission over to your care, for we believe that the American Baptist Missionary Union will prosecute it earnestly, prayerfully and wisely. We know the history of its grand Burman and Telugu missions, and believe that this new Congo mission will be as successfully managed as they have been. We give over freely the whole property of the mission, making the only condition that the Union shall pledge itself to *carry it on vigorously and well*, not to let it languish for want of adequate attention and support, until our missionaries can shake hands with the laborers of the London Missionary Society on Lake Tanganyika, and until missionary stations shall have been established across the entire continent. The Union will require the hearty co-operation of the churches to enable it to develop as it should be developed, the Livingstone Inland Mission. It ought to be a large mission. Instead of twenty-five men, the number now in the field, it ought to have one hundred on its staff.

An Opportunity and an Obligation.

Let me say, that I solemnly believe these discoveries of which I have been speaking, opening up a new world, have placed upon the church of Christ a new and solemn obligation. Africa has been known for four hundred years. We have believed the interior of the continent was desolate like Sahara. We now know it is nothing of the sort. It is a world teeming with people. If this new fact does not make any difference in our lives, we do not deserve to be called Christians at all. I solemnly believe we do not deserve the name, if we do not feel, with this opening up of a new world of perishing men and women, that it demands from each man, woman and child that knows of it, fresh and larger gifts, more earnest prayers. Let me ask, has it ever brought to your eyes a single tear, or given you a sleepless night, or made your heart ache; have you denied yourself a single luxury, or intimated a readiness to sacrifice anything in order that Central Africa might have the gospel? Seven years ago this discovery was made. The remark made by your pastor at the beginning of the meeting is solemnly true; America owes much to Africa. One reason why we surrender this mission to the American church is the feeling that the Baptists of America ought to do something. The Congregationalists have organized a mission at Behar; but the Baptists are doing nothing worth speaking of for Africa. Another reason was that the Baptists of England are also at work on the Congo, and we felt it would not be good to bring a second denomination so near them.

Another thing is that it seems suitable that the great country opened up by their heroic journeys should be entered and occupied by Americans. But above all, as Christians, and not as Americans, I appeal for Christ's sake. Remember he died for these people just as much as for you. He loves this people as much as he loves you. What a woeful crime to let these fifty millions sit in the darkness and shadow of death, when we know that Christ loved them and died for them, and invites us to be witnesses for him, and this is the last great task that lies before the church of God. China has been opened; Japan has been opened; India long since was opened; the islands of the Pacific, or the most of them, have long since been evangelized. Of all the great missions on this globe, the one of which I am speaking is, by far, the most important, the largest, most populous, most dark, most needy and most desperately requiring the gospel, and the Congo river is the most important highway to reach it. To you, Baptist churches of America, is now confided the entrance to that river; possess it for Christ's sake and the gospel's. By the heroic lives of the men and women who have fallen in the struggle (not less than twelve lie on the banks of the Congo), I beseech you by the blood that has been shed, by the lives laid down, by the ten thousand prayers that have gone up for this mission, now that it is in your hands, do not lay down God's work. "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages;" and more than that, he "gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever."

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